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WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

by the Washington Wildlife Commission

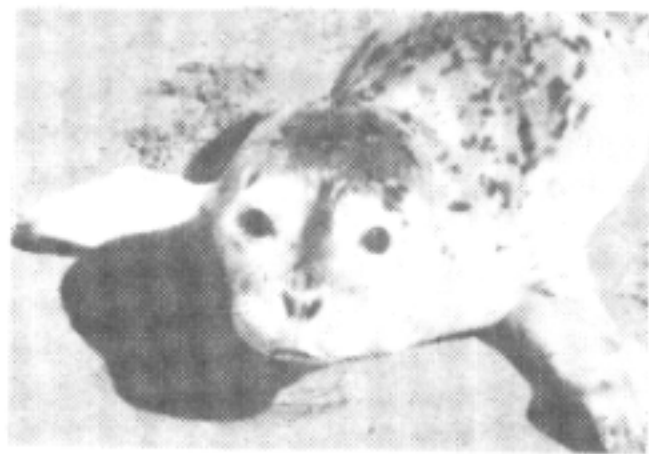


March 8, 1991

Washington Department of Wildlife



Serving Washington's
wildlife and people—
now and in the
future



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INTRODUCTION

The Northwest has a unique lifestyle, treasured by those fortunate to live here and envied by many who don't. When asked what the key ingredients are, most Washington citizens would say the water, the mountains, the forests and our spectacular wildlife. Surveys show more than 80% of our people appreciate wildlife in their daily lives. We include it in many diverse ways. Whether watching, fishing, hunting or trapping, we all value our wildlife resource. In turn, these activities stimulate hundreds of millions of dollars in the state's economy each year and support thousands of jobs. We have a fragile treasure, and we want it preserved.

Washington's citizens gave the Department of Wildlife a mandate in 1933 to protect this treasure. Though modified over the years, that mandate remains essentially intact today:

—First, it is our responsibility to be the stewards of the resource on behalf of the people. We must strive to preserve the resource from extinction and perpetuate it for future generations. We must ensure the resource is protected from undue damage or inappropriate use. Washington is known for its amazing wildlife diversity and we want to maintain it. We recognize that habitat is the key to success because there can be no wildlife without it.

—Second, it is our responsibility to maximize the recreational benefits of wildlife to people consistent with sound biological management. In a society filled with stresses of modern life, wildlife-oriented recreation fills an important need for rejuvenation and restoration of the spirit. Hunting, fishing, and trapping maintain our historical traditions. Other appreciative wildlife recreational uses are continually expanding. Wildlife is aesthetically pleasing to all users whether they hunt, fish, trap, watch, photograph or study wildlife, or just look at wildlife art. Many people feel a benefit simply knowing that the resource exists, that our options for future use are preserved and that our wildlife heritage will be passed along to future generations.

The Washington Wildlife Commission has a vision to accomplish this mandate. Our state's wildlife must be a resource for all of Washington's citizens. This resource must be encouraged to flourish and prosper in quality habitats throughout the state. It must be accessible for a diverse range of recreational opportunities. It must be elevated to a higher level of importance in land use decisions. And, it must be adequately financed by a stable funding system that equitably spreads the cost of resource management among all citizens. Because the resource is valued and shared by all, there is a baseline of

management which must be equitably supported by the entire citizenry in order to maintain this heritage.

The Commission seeks to build unity among all constituents. New partnerships must be formed, fostering an attitude of cooperation and coordination among the varied wildlife interest groups. The resource can be preserved, protected and improved only if we work together for the common good. We must speak to the fundamentals of outdoor ethics and responsibility, practicing their guiding tenants at all times.

There is another partnership of utmost importance to make the system work—the partnership between Commission and agency. Together they are the Department of Wildlife. Each has indispensable, interlocking roles. The Commission establishes the Department's basic goals and objectives, and sets hunting, fishing and trapping seasons. The agency develops and implements programs, performing the hands-on work needed to manage the resource. The Commission also serves as a primary link with citizens, serving as a major contact point for voicing their desires. The Commission combines the vision expressed in its mandate with the expressed desires of its constituents into this set of goals, policies and objectives to guide the agency in developing and providing wildlife management programs.

To achieve desired results, management efforts must be clearly focused by a set of long-range goals. Policies guide



WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

the agency's management efforts by directing program approaches or by setting program limits and standards. Objectives specify shorter term, measurable results which provide a means for assessing progress toward goal achievement.

These goals, policies and objectives establish an ambitious program for managing and improving Washington's wildlife resource. Most of these goals will be achieved only after many years of hard work and public investment.

The Commission recognizes that in-

formed, involved sportsmen's groups and wildlife organizations, as well as a concerned, educated public, are essential to a strong, purposeful Wildlife Commission and agency. The problem comes in balancing scientific professionalism with public involvement. The public should understand that wildlife management must be based on biological and ecological principles and that it should be conducted with the highest standards of professional expertise. Wildlife managers in turn should be sensitive to public concerns and be more cognizant of their custodial role.

As with all Commission decisions, these goals, policies and objectives will be reviewed with the public and refined regularly to ensure that they reflect public desires. Objectives will need review most often because they serve as checkpoints for measuring progress toward goals. Several objectives are only the first step of many in a long sequence needed for success. As objectives are met, they will be replaced with new objectives for the next step.

"The Department of Wildlife shall preserve, protect, and perpetuate Washington's diverse wildlife, and wildlife habitats and shall maximize the recreational and aesthetic benefits of wildlife for all citizens."

—Mission Statement







GOALS

Maintain Washington's wildlife in a healthy condition and pass it along intact to succeeding generations. Some specific components of this goal include:

- Maintain diversity, distribution and a reasonable abundance of all native wildlife and their habitats.
- Maintain abundant populations of naturally reproducing game species for consumptive use.
- Restore depleted native game populations to healthy levels.
- Achieve recovery and delisting of threatened and endangered species.
- Ensure security of sensitive species populations to prevent the need for them to be listed as threatened or endangered.
- Prevent the illegal harvest, abusive use and inappropriate commercialization of wildlife.



POLICIES

Department management shall provide for diverse and healthy wildlife populations. Department programs shall emphasize native species and natural production. Some specific components of this policy include:

- All species of wildlife shall be considered in the development of wildlife management plans to prevent undue detrimental impacts on non-target species.
- Wildlife shall be managed for optimum diversity within the capabilities of each habitat type.
- Impacts on ecosystems shall be considered when making wildlife management decisions so that undue impacts can be avoided.
- Importation of exotic wildlife species shall be carefully assessed and limited to avoid introduction of diseases and control displacement of, or conflict with, existing or native species on limited habitat.
- Wildlife will be managed for natural production to sustain recreational opportunities within habitat capabilities. Significant additional recreational opportunities shall be provided through artificial propagation programs for game fish and game birds.
- Live wildlife should remain free-roaming in a wild state. The Commission is opposed to the confinement of the state's wildlife through the use of fencing.
- Making pets from wild animals is an inappropriate use of wildlife. Taming of wildlife shall be discouraged.
- Genetic factors shall be considered in all wildlife supplemental programs.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify priority wildlife population and distribution goals.
- Monitor wildlife populations for achievement of population and distribution goals.
- Prevent extirpation of any native wildlife species.
- Determine the status of sensitive species and assure the security of their populations.
- Increase populations of threatened or endangered species to target levels established by the agency and review their status annually.
- Increase populations of depleted game species to target levels established by the agency and review their status periodically (e.g., native stream fish and native game birds).
- Determine and monitor the trends in illegal harvest of wildlife and minimize this activity to the greatest extent possible.
- Define uses of wildlife which are abusive or inappropriate commercialization.
- Identify and protect major migratory corridors for wildlife.
- Remove wildlife from areas surrounded by impassible fences and allow them to roam free.
- Develop a statewide inventory and classification of rivers and streams.
- Develop a statewide inventory and classification of lakes.
- Develop a management plan for each river, stream and lake.

RECREATION

GOALS

Maximize and diversify the opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation and photography and other legitimate wildlife-oriented recreation consistent with sound resource management. Some specific components of this goal include:

- Provide all legitimate wildlife enthusiasts with reasonable opportunities to participate in their desired experience and have some reasonable expectation for success.
- Preserve the long-standing traditions of hunting so this historic use of wildlife can be passed to future generations. Provide for a broad diversity of different hunting experiences.
- Meet an increasing demand for sport fishing by providing a diversity of angling opportunities.
- Provide for additional and diverse opportunities to meet the rapidly increasing demand for non-consumptive wildlife use.



POLICIES

Washington's wildlife resources belong to all residents of the state. The Department shall initiate and support activities, programs and legislation designed to ensure that wildlife remains a public resource available for the enjoyment of all citizens. Some specific components of this policy include:

- Management shall consider and provide for a diversity of opportunity in methods of take.
- Some areas shall be managed for quality hunting and fishing opportunities.
- Some areas shall be managed for maximum harvest numbers (sustained yield).
- Some areas shall be managed for a diversity of opportunity for wildlife interpretation, education and observation.
- The Commission shall strive for maximum clarity and effectiveness of its regulations through periodic review and refinement.
- The harvestable surplus of wildlife shall be made available principally to the citizens of Washington.



OBJECTIVES

- Establish baseline data on the demand for wildlife-associated recreation.
- Identify, monitor, and evaluate trends in wildlife-associated recreation to determine if the goals are being met.
- Review and refine Department regulations periodically.
- Maintain a high quality artificial production program for fishing and upland birds.
- Increase opportunities for wildlife-associated recreation in urban areas.
- Provide fishing opportunities for children in urban areas.
- Provide opportunities for learning and improving hunting and shooting skills.
- Provide areas and opportunity for "quality" hunting, fishing and other wildlife-related recreation activities.
- On a regular basis, monitor public satisfaction to determine the success of the Department's recreational management strategies.
- Draft proposals for mandatory hunter education for first-time hunting license buyers.
- Evaluate the potential for year-round seasons for each lake in the state.







GOALS

Secure the habitats needed to ensure the integrity of natural ecosystems, maintain or enhance the diversity and abundance of our wildlife populations and maximize wildlife-associated recreation. Strive for no net loss of habitat in all habitat protection efforts. Some specific components of this goal include:

- Secure the habitats needed to maintain abundant populations of naturally reproducing game species.
- Secure the habitats in urban areas needed to maintain urban wildlife.
- Secure and enhance habitats needed to restore specific depleted populations. Secure sufficient instream flows and riparian habitats needed to restore native stream fish populations.
- Secure, enhance, or restore habitats needed to achieve recovery and delisting of threatened and endangered species.
- Secure, enhance, or restore habitats needed to provide population stability, and prevent declines of sensitive species.
- Focus special protection, enhancement or restoration efforts on key habitats critical for maintaining wildlife. Some of these key habitats include but are not limited to:
 - Breeding, feeding, resting and concentration areas for endangered, threatened or sensitive species.
 - Old-growth ecosystems.
 - Native shrub/steppe habitat.
 - Big game winter/summer range.
 - Wetlands and riparian areas.
 - Free-flowing streams.
 - Oak woodlands.
 - Band-tailed pigeon mineral springs.
 - Upland bird nesting and winter cover.
 - Spawning areas.

POLICIES

Suitable and sufficient habitat is the most critical need for diverse and abundant wildlife populations. All wildlife need food, water, shelter, and living space to survive. The amount and quality of habitat are a major control on wildlife abundance. The Department shall pursue the protection, restoration or enhancement of wildlife habitat as its primary approaches to maintaining healthy wildlife populations and maximizing wildlife-associated recreation.

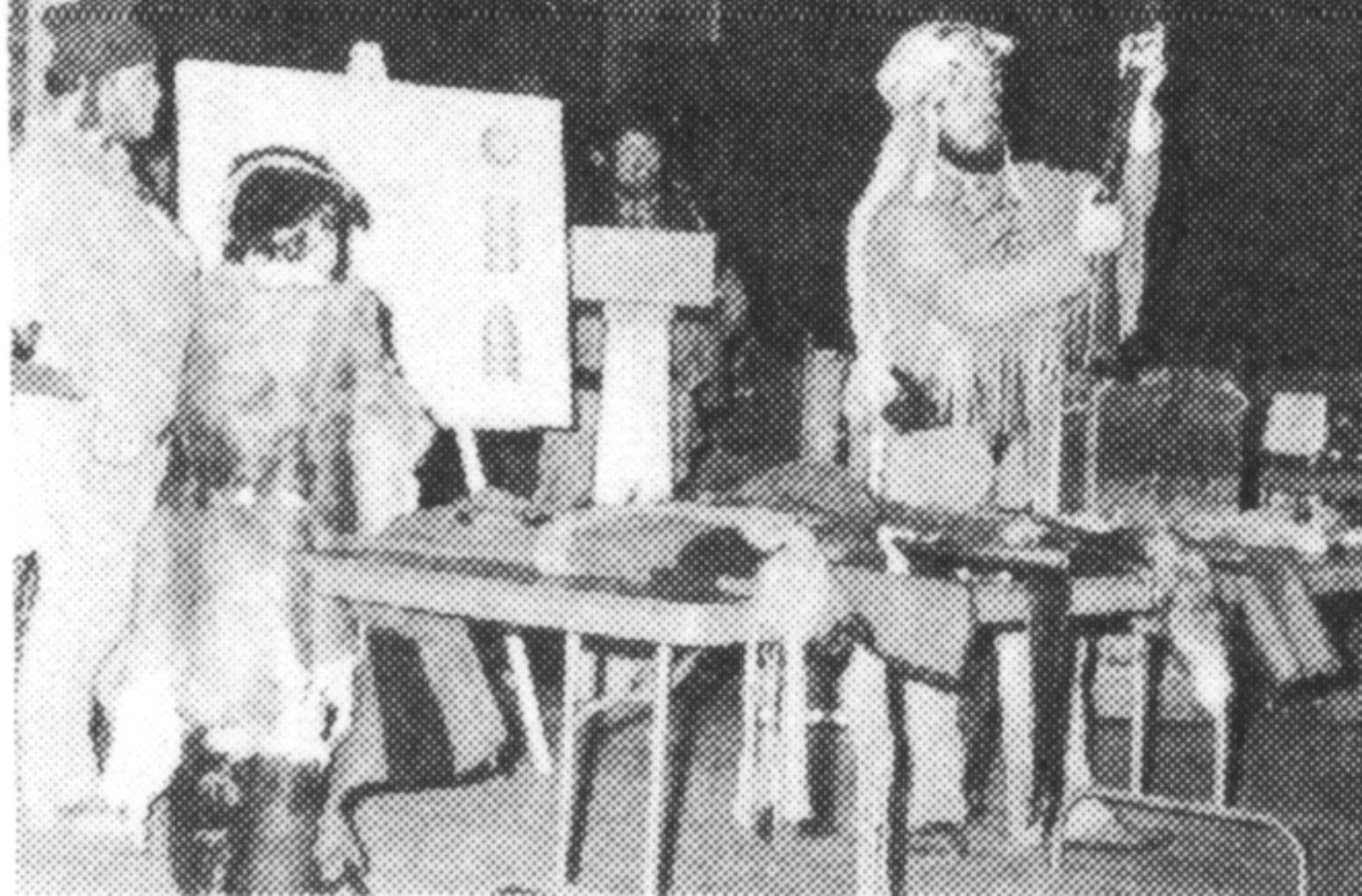
- The Department shall encourage protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat on all lands.
- The Department will seek early identification of potential problems or threats to habitat. It will evaluate proposals or actions that threaten wildlife habitat and bring them to the attention of proponents and the public.
- Department-controlled lands will be managed primarily for the benefit of wildlife and wildlife-related recreation. Land use decisions will be based on long-term benefits to habitat and wildlife, even though they may preclude an economic return to the Department.
- The Department will oppose legislation and programs that would result in significant losses of wildlife or wildlife habitat.
- For development projects covered by environmental laws, the Department will strive to prevent negative impacts to wildlife habitat. When impacts to wildlife habitat are unavoidable, mitigation measures shall be utilized to the maximum extent allowed by law. For development projects not covered by environmental laws, the Department shall strive to improve those laws.
- Suitable unroaded and closed road areas will be established for the benefit of wildlife and dispersed recreation.
- Water is a critical and vested component of wildlife habitat, and it should be protected, developed and maintained to

provide for wildlife's continued historic use.

- Disruptive uses of sensitive wildlife areas will be discouraged if it is determined that habitat or wildlife will be adversely affected.
- Private and government land holders shall be encouraged to maintain or increase wetland habitat.

OBJECTIVES

- Estimate the habitat needed to meet wildlife and habitat goals, monitor habitat changes and analyze trends. The objective for each habitat shall be specified in agency plans.
- Protect or enhance habitat needed to meet the wildlife population, distribution, diversity and wildlife-associated recreation goals.
- Review Department policy on grazing of Department-controlled lands to ensure benefits to wildlife.
- Review instream flow criteria for all flow-controlled streams to ensure adequate flows.
- Secure commitments from responsible authorities for the maintenance of minimum stream flows.
- Prepare plans for emergency responses to high impact environmental incidents which will endanger wildlife and/or habitat from oil and toxic substance spills and fires.
- Actively pursue public acquisition of wetlands and water rights to support those wetlands.
- Conduct habitat inventory and analysis of Department-owned or -controlled lands.
- Implement the priority habitats and species project statewide.
- Identify and protect sensitive spawning and rearing areas.





COORDINATED MANAGEMENT

GOALS

Develop and maintain a coordinated and cooperative wildlife management process with all people interested in wildlife and with the public agencies, tribal entities and private landowners who own the majority of wildlife habitat.

POLICIES

Successful management of wildlife resources involves many political, social and jurisdictional entities.

- The Department shall exercise initiative in developing cooperation and coordination among these entities for the betterment of wildlife management.

- Wildlife shall be used as an indicator of the condition of our environment.

- The Department shall provide the input to planning and permitting agencies needed to protect wildlife and its habitat.

- The Department shall strive to assure that wildlife resources are considered as legitimate uses of land and water along with all other uses.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify potential areas for improved coordination in wildlife and habitat management.

- Develop a comprehensive, statewide program to integrate consideration of wildlife issues in all land and water use decisions.

- Encourage local government planning for wildlife habitat preservation.

- Develop active lines of communication to coordinate management activities with tribes and state and federal agencies.

- Encourage cooperative research projects with other governmental and private managers and academic institutions.

- Encourage and participate in cooperative management programs such as Timber, Fish, and Wildlife.

- Develop a program to encourage private landowners to manage their lands for the benefit of wildlife and wildlife recreation.

- Coordinate big game management with adjacent states where populations are identified as interstate migratory herds.

- Cooperate with lead agencies in establishing a clearing house for interagency sharing of information and coordinated response on habitat protection issues and permit reviews.



GOALS

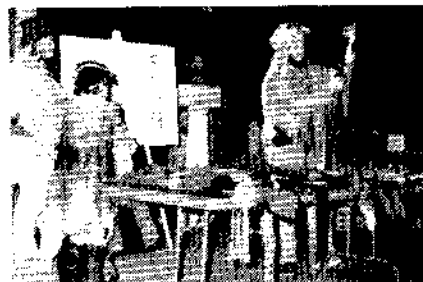
Build a bridge of understanding with the public and its elected representatives for better appreciation of all wildlife and its values to all citizens. Some specific components of this goal include:

- Increase public understanding of wildlife that occurs naturally in Washington, its problems and needs, and the complexity of management.
- Achieve public recognition of the broad ecosystem requirements of wildlife.
- Increase public awareness of the need for safe and ethical behavior when using the resource and of responsibility to all wildlife species.
- Increase public understanding of the contribution of fish and wildlife-related recreation to the state's economy and to the maintenance and management of the state's wildlife resources.

POLICIES

The future of Washington's wildlife depends on full appreciation and support of all Washington citizens.

- The Department shall provide educational opportunities to inform citizens both young and old of the diversity, richness and fragility of wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- The Department shall support beneficial wildlife education efforts by educational institutions and other governmental and private organizations when feasible.
- Educational methods and materials utilizing modern communication techniques shall be implemented to achieve a better public understanding of wildlife and wildlife-associated recreation.



OBJECTIVES

- Develop and periodically conduct surveys to monitor indicators of public understanding:
 - Washington's wildlife, its problems, needs and complexity.
 - Broad ecosystem requirements for management.
 - Economic value of wildlife.
- Achieve changes in these indicators that demonstrate improved understanding.
- Develop communication techniques to regularly inform the public of Department activities and programs.
- Encourage and promote education about wildlife species, including their identification, behavior, and needs.
- Develop non-traditional "outreach" programs to further enhance wildlife education needs.
- Work with the state's colleges and universities to promote and coordinate their wildlife education curriculums and research.
- Continue Project WILD at a viable level.

FUNDING

GOALS

Obtain a stable and sufficient funding base to supply the investment needed to improve and maintain the resource.



POLICIES

All residents of the state benefit economically, recreationally, and aesthetically from our wildlife resources. Adequate funding for proper management is an investment for future generations and is the responsibility of everyone.

- The Department shall seek a stable and sufficient funding base which spreads the cost of managing our wildlife resources equitably among all citizens.

OBJECTIVES

- Obtain a funding base sufficient to secure the habitat needed to maintain or improve the wildlife resource.
- Obtain a funding base sufficient to restore and maintain Department capital facilities and lands.
- Obtain a funding base sufficient to support the operations of a modern, efficient wildlife agency.
- Establish the economic value of wildlife and wildlife recreation, applying state-of-the-art techniques, and the importance to state and local economies.
- Seek private and/or federal funding for specific wildlife programs.

AGENCY MANAGEMENT

GOALS

Become the best, most effective, wildlife management agency in the country. Some specific components of this goal include:

- Manage the resource with state-of-the-art techniques and systems.
- Restore the agency's capital facilities to a high quality standard.
- Provide a modern, progressive, organization management system which produces an effective and efficient agency, and which promotes high employee morale and commitment to the agency mission.
- Produce an agency with a strong professional image and a high level of professionalism among employees.

"Our primary measure of success or failure is the quantity and quality of wildlife and wildlife habitat that is available for enjoyment by this and future generations of the people of the state of Washington."

POLICIES

The Director shall maintain an effective and efficient organizational structure and administrative system to carry out the Department's basic goals and objectives set by the Commission.

• The Director shall develop a level of accountability to ensure consistent application of Department programs and policies.

• Preventive enforcement and courteous, professional demeanor shall be the primary approaches to enforcement.

OBJECTIVES

• Identify state-of-the-art resource management techniques and periodically review the agency's use of new and effective techniques.

• Identify the capital facility improvements needed, obtain necessary funds and complete the improvements.

• Conduct periodic program reviews and implement refinements and improvements.

• Review the agency's organizational management system and periodically evaluate agency efficiency and effectiveness.

• Maintain clear lines of authority throughout the Department.

• Expand the role of Department employees in problem solving and decision making.

• Encourage and implement progressive management methods and innovative management techniques.

• Develop accountability procedures for evaluating the achievement of the Department's goals, policies, and objectives.

• Maintain a formal cyclic planning, budgeting and review process.

• Develop a long-range plan jointly between the agency and Commission.

• Develop the budget to implement the agency's plans and review annually with the Commission.

• Establish a strong research component within the agency and develop or improve agency programs based on the results.

• Establish a central filing system, automated corporate database and research library of materials developed or utilized by Department employees.

• Review and strengthen the internal education program to increase professionalism and public relations skills.

The Washington Department of Wildlife will provide equal opportunities to all potential and existing employees without regard to race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, or Vietnam Era Veteran's status.

The department received Federal Aid for fish and wildlife restoration. The department is subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin or handicap. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any department program, activity, or facility, or if you want further information about Title VI or Section 504, write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, or Washington Department of Wildlife, 600 Capitol Way N, Olympia, WA 98501-1091.